

The listing of claims presented below replaces all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A double-stranded RNA molecule capable of suppressing the expression of a target gene in a cell by RNAi, which is improved based on a conventional siRNA consisting of completely complementary sense and antisense strands designed such that only one or more consecutive nucleotides in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of at the ends of the double-stranded part, only one nucleotide at around the center of the double-stranded part or both in said RNA molecule are not complementary to the antisense strand,
wherein the sense strand of the double-stranded part has adequate number of nucleotides which are complementary to the antisense strand for enabling the hybridization of both strands in said cell.
2. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 1 to 4.
3. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 2.
4. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1, which is designed such that one additional nucleotide located at 11-13 from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is not complementary to the antisense strand.
5. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 4, which is designed such that a nucleotide located at position 12 from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is not complementary to the antisense strand.
6. (Cancelled)

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1, which does not induce double-stranded RNA-dependent protein kinase or 2',5'-oligoadenylate synthetase in a mammalian cell.

10. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 9, which has a strand length of 29 or less nucleotides.

11. (Currently Amended) A double-stranded RNA molecule capable of suppressing the expression of a target gene in a cell by RNAi, which is improved based on a conventional siRNA sense and antisense strands designed such that only one or more consecutive nucleotides in order from the 5'-end of sense strand of at the ends of the double-stranded part, only one residue at around the center of the double-stranded part or both in said RNA molecule are not complementary to the antisense strand,

wherein the sense strand of the double-stranded part has adequate number of nucleotides which are complementary to the antisense strand for enabling the hybridization of both strands in said cell.

12. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 11, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 5'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 1 to 4.

13. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 11, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 5'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 2.

14. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 11, which is designed such that one or more additional nucleotides in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part are not complementary to the antisense strand.

15. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 14, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 1 to 4.

16. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 14, wherein the number of the nucleotides which are not complementary to the antisense strand in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is 2.

17. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 11, which is designed such that one additional nucleotide located at position 11-13 from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is not complementary to the antisense strand.

18. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 17, which is designed such that a nucleotide located at position 12 from the 3'-end of the sense strand of the double-stranded part is not complementary to the antisense strand.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Original) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 11, which does not induce double-stranded RNA-dependent protein kinase or 2',5'-oligoadenylate synthetase in a mammalian cell.

23. (Previously Presented) The double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 22, which each strand has a strand length of 29 or less nucleotides.

24. (Withdrawn) A method for suppressing the expression of a target gene in a cell, comprising a step of introducing the double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1 into the cell.

25. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 24, wherein the cell is a mammalian cell.

26. (Previously Presented) A vector comprising both of a DNA encoding the sense strand of the double-stranded RNA molecule according to claim 1 and a DNA encoding the antisense strand of said RNA molecule.

27. (Withdrawn) A method for suppressing the expression of a target gene in a cell, comprising a step of introducing a combination of a vector containing a DNA encoding the sense strand of the double-stranded RNA molecule capable of suppressing the expression of a target gene in a cell by RNAi, which is designed such that one or more nucleotides in order from the 3'-end of the sense strand of double-stranded part in said RNA molecule are not complementary to the antisense strand, wherein the sense strand of the double-stranded part has adequate number of nucleotides which are complementary to the antisense strand for enabling the hybridization of both strands in said cell and a vector containing a DNA encoding the antisense strand of said RNA molecule, or a vector according to claim 26, into the cell.

28. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 27, wherein the cell is a mammalian cell.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Cancelled)